

Message Text

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EXDIS/MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MASS, TH

SUBJ: CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE MAP AND MASF ASSETS IN THAILAND

1. SEPTELS (INCLUDING THOSE IN MILITARY CHANNELS) HAVE TRANSMITTED AND WILL CONTINUE TO TRANSMIT INFO ON CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE MAP AND MASF ASSETS ARRIVING IN THAILAND. SO FAR, THESE CONSIST ALMOST ENTIRELY OF AIR FORCE ITEMS. THAI PREVIOUSLY TURNED OVER ALL CAMBODIAN ASSETS TO USG CONTROL HERE, AND AFTER SOME BACKING AND FILLING, HAVE PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED US TITLE TO VIETNAMESE ASSETS. CHARGE HAS INFORMED WASHINGTON BY TELEPHONE AND U.S. MILITARY HERE THAT MAJOR ITEMS OF VIETNAMESE EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE MOVED OUT SOONEST BEFORE PRESENCE IN THAILAND BECOMES A POLITICAL ISSUE. STEPS ARE NOW UNDERWAY TO MOVE QUICKLY MOST ITEMS WHICH ARE TO LEAVE THAILAND.

2. MORNING MAY 2, COMUSMACHTAI MET WITH THAI SUPREME COMMAND CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN AT LATTER'S REQUEST. KRIANGSAK BEGAN BY REAFFIRMING THAT RTG RECOGNIZED US TITLE TO VN ASSETS IN THAILAND AND WOULD NOT SEEK IN ANY WAY TO OBSTRUCT ITS OUTWARD MOVEMENT. HE DID, HOWEVER, WISH TO REQUEST CONSIDERATION OF TURNOVER OF CERTAIN ASSETS FOR RTAF AS FOLLOWS:

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3. CAMBODIAN MAF ASSETS. THAI WOULD LIKE THE FOLLOWING:

A. TEN C-123K AIRCRAFT. (KRIANGSAK OFFERED TO RETURN TO US FOUR OPERATIONALLY READY C-123B'S PRESENTLY IN RTAF INVENTORY.)

B. THIRTY-SIX T-28D'S. (IF THESE ARE MADE AVAILABLE, THAI WILL TURN IN THEIR CURRENT FLEET OF 31 T-28D'S. CAMBODIAN T-28'S ARE IN SOMEWHAT BETTER CONDITION.)

C. SEVEN AC-47'S.

D. THIRTEEN UH-1H HELICOPTERS. (THESE ARE NOT IN GOOD CONDITION. FOUR NEED COMPLETE REBUILD.)

4. VIETNAMESE ASSETS. KRIANGSAK ASKED FOR:

A. ONE SQUADRON OF F-5E'S.

B. ONE SQUADRON OF A-37'S.

C. TWO F-5B'S.

D. TWO C-47'S.

E. ONE A-37. (THIS BULLET-RIDDLED AIRCRAFT CRASH-LANDED AT KHON KAEN, HITTING A BRIDGE IN THE PROCESS. IT WOULD BE USED FOR ATTRITION.)

F. TWELVE UH-1H. (THESE ARE IN VERY POOR CONDITION AND WOULD BE OF NO VALUE ANYWHERE EXCEPT IN THAILAND, WHERE THEY COULD BE PUT IN SHAPE AT THE THAI-AM UDORN FACILITY. FOUR OF THEM CRASH-LANDED.)

5. KRIANGSAK WAS TOLD THAT NO CONSIDERATION COULD BE GIVEN TO TURNING OVER VNAF F-5E'S OR A-37'S. HE WAS TOLD THAT WE WOULD TAKE A READING ON THE F-5B'S, BUT IT SEEMED DOUBTFUL THAT CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO TURNING OVER MORE THAN ONE TO THE THAI. KRIANGSAK SAID THAT THE THAI WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL FOR EVEN ONE OF THE TWO AIRCRAFT.

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6. MACTHAI HAS INSPECTED THE ASSETS IN QUESTION AND HAS ASCERTAINED THAT THOSE REQUESTED BY THE THAI (EXCLUDING F-5E'S AND A-37'S) QUALIFY AS EXCESS. MUCH OF WHAT THE THAI HAVE ASKED FOR IS IN POOR CONDITION BUT COULD BECOME OPERATIONAL WHEN PUT THROUGH MAINTENANCE WHICH THE THAI THEMSELVES ARE CAPABLE OF CARRYING OUT. THEY FALL WITHIN JSOP AND THAI FORCE GOALS AND WOULD

PRETTY WELL FILL MOST THAI AIR FORCE REQUIREMENTS.

7. ONCE AGAIN, AS DURING THE EVACUATION OF CAMBODIAN MAP ASSETS, THE THAI HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY COOPERATIVE IN DEALING WITH THE DISPOSITION OF VIETNAMESE ASSETS. DESPITE SOME SERIOUS BUT TEMPORARY CONFUSION ON THE POLITICAL SIDE OF THE RTG AS A RESULT OF UNHELPFUL PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY SENIOR THAI CIVILIAN OFFICIALS, SUPREME COMMAND HAS VERY STRONGLY UPHELD THE PRINCIPLE OF US TITLE TO ALL CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE ASSETS. IN DOING SO, THEY HAVE INCURRED CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL RISKS.

8. AT A TIME WHEN THAI CONFIDENCE IN THE US COMMITMENT TO THAI SECURITY IS AT A VERY LOW EBB, TURNOVER OF THE REQUESTED ASSETS (EXCLUDING, OF COURSE, THE F-5E'S AND THE A-37'S) WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD BOLSTERING THAI CONFIDENCE IN U.S. SUPPORT AND IN GAINING CONTINUED COOPERATION OF THE THAI MILITARY ON THE ROCKY PATH THAT LIES AHEAD FOR THE US PRESENCE HERE. THAILAND IS THE COUNTRY MOST DIRECTLY THREATENED AS A RESULT OF THE COLLAPSE OF NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. WE BELIEVE IT MOST IMPORTANT FOR U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS THAT IT HAVE THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE PRIORITY FOR THIS EXCESS EQUIPMENT. WE CANNOT URGE TOO STRONGLY THAT THESE ASSETS BE IMMEDIATELY TURNED OVER TO THE THAI AT NO CHARGE TO THE THAI MAP PROGRAM. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY COULD EASILY FIT WITHIN THE \$100 MILLION GLOBAL EXTRA-CONUS CEILING.

9. TO SUMMARIZE, THE THAI RECOGNIZE US TITLE TO ALL CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE MAP AND MASF ASSETS. THEY ARE NOT HOLDING US UP AND HAVE RELEASED THESE ASSETS TO
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US CONTROL WITHOUT CONDITIONS. MACTHAI HAS ALREADY INITIATED OUTWARD MOVEMENT IMMEDIATELY OF THE A-37'S, F-5E'S, C-130'S, AND C-7'S. AS TO THE REMAINING ASSETS, THE THAI HAVE REQUESTED (A) FROM CAMBODIAN ASSETS: TEN C-123K'S, THIRTY-SIX T-28D'S, SEVEN AC-47'S, AND THIRTEEN UH-1H'S, IN RETURN FOR WHICH THEY WILL TURN IN FOUR C-123B'S AND THIRTY-ONE T-28D'S; (B) FROM VNAF ASSETS, ONE SQUADRON EACH OF F-5E'S AND A-37'S (THESE HAVE BEEN REFUSED), TWO F-5B'S, TWO C-47'S, ONE CRASHED A-37 AND TWELVE UH-1H'S. WE STRONGLY URGE THAT THEY BE GIVEN IMMEDIATELY A FAVORABLE RESPONSE. IF TURNED OVER TO THE THAI, THESE ASSETS WILL BECOME A PART OF THE RTAF INVENTORY WITH US REVERSIONARY TITLE. THERE NEED THUS BE NO CONCERN AS TO THEIR ULTIMATE DISPOSITION IN LIGHT OF FUTURE THAI-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS.

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